Past Redesigns

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Past Redesigns

by TigerPrawn

Summary

Sort of a companion piece to my Hannigram fic Past and Future Designs - taking the little Tristhad bits therein and using/rewriting them as a jumping point.

Telling the story of how Galahad and Tristan first got together, through to the battle with the Saxons and beyond...

Written for Tristhad Week, I'll be posting a chapter a day Monday to Friday.

Notes

To be brutally honest, I wasn't sure about posting this as it is far from my best work, but I've put so much time into it now I felt I should. I am only completely happy with the first chapter, the rest isn't what I had hoped as I just haven't had the time as me and the little cub have been sick with a terrible cold :(

I hope you enjoy it all anyway, but please forgive any failings!

Chapter 1

Bors had his woman, Lancelot had his many women. Tristan and Galahad had each other. So long had the pair been inseparable that their brothers at arms could not recall a time when they were not one. Their intimacy and bond was an accepted part of the knight's lives.

Galahad could remember the first day he thought of Tristan as more than a fellow soldier, though had he thought about it, it had crept up on him over time before he realised what the feelings were. He had always admired the older knight, taken heed of his lessons. Tristan had trained him in archery and swordsmanship, as he had for other younger knights. And yet, Galahad often felt special - as a favourite pupil might - though he pushed this from his mind as his own imaginings. Hubris did not suit any of them well.

He had admired the knight's skills and talent. It had taken him time to realise that he also admired his form and personality. He was a stoic and pragmatic man, he rarely spoke unless he had something to say. And yet he would smile gently and happily listen as Galahad nattered on about nothing in particular, just filling the air with words. His body was firm and many times Galahad had let his eyes linger longer than he should, putting it down to little more than an admiration of Tristan's well honed form. Although Galahad felt a deep and warm feeling when thinking of Tristan, he had not realised it nor understood really what it was until the day they bathed in the lake together.

It had been a hot summer day, though the breeze still blew a little cool. They had returned from a battle with the Woad, and it really had been a battle. Not the often experienced skirmish with raiding parties - it was a two day battle with what seemed a small army. The knights pushed them back with no loss of life on this occasion, but all were left bloodied. When Tristan had rode out to the lake the next day, Galahad had followed easily. He had not been invited, but an invitation was unnecessary, they had bathed together before, though never just the two of them alone. He had caught up with the older knight who had not sent him back to camp but happily accepted his company.

They had both stripped - neither a stranger to seeing the fellow knights in a state of undress - but this time was different. Galahad had turned and gasped as he saw Tristan's body disappearing into the water. For his part the older knight had turned and raised an eyebrow, perhaps in questioning. Galahad found his heart aching with concern, beyond that he usually felt for his fellows. He had finished undressing and joined Tristan quickly, concern not leaving his expression.

"What is it pup?" Tristan had asked with a small smile.

Galahad hadn't answered, instead he had placed his hand on Tristan's arm and inspected the injuries to his back and side.Tristan's back was a mass of bruises, on his left side was a sword wound, that although shallow, was long and angry.

"I did not realise you were so badly injured." Galahad finally spoke. He absentmindedly, and with no prompt nor permission, took the cloth he had brought with him and began cleaning

the wound. “This could fester if you can’t reach to clean it.”

Tristan hadn’t replied. Instead his head lolled back at the touch of the younger knight’s hand running gently over him, and a slight moan escaped his lips. Galahad’s hands stopped and he swallowed despite his mouth being dry. He could feel a burn on his cheeks - a blush rising from his chest that he was glad Tristan could not see with his back to him.

“Don’t stop little pup…” Tristan told him and Galahad could hear his smile, feel the fondness in the name he had given him many years before. Galahad could feel his burgeoning arousal and became embarrassed. He had been aroused before, had even taken a woman to bed one night. But this he had not expected. The ache in his groin was mirrored by the ache in his chest. His concern for his comrade was deeper than it should be, he realised - they were knights and injuries happened. He removed his hands from Tristan’s naked form as he realised the depth of his feelings and felt suddenly protective of those feelings. He didn’t want them to be known until he had time to process them, he was immediately concerned that Tristan would laugh at the feelings and tease him as he did when he missed a mark at archery even now that they were grown.

Galahad didn’t have chance to step back before Tristan turned and grabbed up his hands, cloth and all.

“Will you not continue?” He asked, his smile seemed cautiously amused.

“I…” Galahad wasn’t sure how to answer - would it now seem odd for him not continue after essentially offering to help clean the wound as a brother might?

“I wish you would.” Tristan told him, stepping a little closer so that barely any distance remained between them. “I have wished that for some time and hoped you might too.” Anyone else might have blushed but Tristan never held with such shame, Galahad knew. He spoke plainly and Galahad always appreciated that.

“Wished… Um, you wish me to help clean your wounds?” Galahad tried to clarify his meaning, not wanting to presume a reflection of his own thoughts and feelings, as his hands trembled in Tristan’s. They were caught between pulling away and moving to touch him again - he wasn’t sure which would happen if Tristan released them.

Tristan let out a short, low laugh. “Perhaps. Moreover I hoped you would like to touch me the way I would like to touch you.” He ran his tongue over his lips as his eyes fell upon Galahad’s mouth. “That is to say, I would like to touch you intimately.”

Galahad’s mouth ran dry at the clarification and he licked his lips in an accidental mirroring, realising Tristan’s eyes followed his tongue as he did so. Not trusting himself to speak, Galahad slowly nodded as he blushed fiercely. He felt crushed under the weight of Tristan’s words and his unwavering gaze.

Tristan pulled Galahad’s hands to his chest, and leaned in the small distance remaining in order to taste the younger knight’s mouth. Galahad all but whimpered into the kiss as Tristan’s tongue pressed between his lips, which he gladly surrendered. Their bodies slowly pressed together, another hot flush ripping through him as he felt Tristan’s arousal against his

own. Not embarrassment this time, but a deeper form of arousal than he had ever experienced before. His entire being sang out for Tristan, and that's when he knew that he was in love.

Galahad still remembered it clearly and fondly - feeling amused at his naivety when he did so. Since then he had grown in experience and confidence both sexually and in his love for Tristan and knowledge of Tristan's love for him. That night, after they had sated themselves in the lake, they had lain together in Tristan's quarters. Galahad had ended curled into the broad chest as the sun started to come up.

"I am glad of this. I want to always fall asleep like this." Tristan breathed the words quietly into Galahad's curls. Galahad's heart skipped for a moment and his breath hitched in his throat. He had never known the older knight to speak so freely of emotion and it warmed him deeply.

"I didn't even know I wanted this until I realised I had wanted it for longer than I can recall." Galahad confessed. "When did you know you wanted this?"

Tristan hummed, Galahad easily knowing without looking that the man was smiling. "I had not let myself think such things when we were younger - such frivolous feelings are not suited to this life. I had known I would remain without love as long as I lived this life and I thought I was happy with that. But I put my realisation that I could no longer deny my feelings for you down to last month. When I saw Livinia leaving your quarters and I knew you had become a man, and I regretted that it was not I who had made you so."

At the words a shiver ran through Galahad and he looked up into his lover's eyes, seeing his own feelings reflected there.

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Life continued as this for four years. When one would appear from the other's quarters or they would ride off together to scout, no one thought much of it.

Tristan was glad of this. He was a stoic and mostly private person who would not have been comfortable with the same cries of triumph the knights would call to Lancelot on his returning from an evening in a woman's company. In private Tristan was everything to Galahad but in public he remained, what he would deem, appropriate. Even so there were the occasions when Tristan was glad to be able to steal a kiss or lay a hand on Galahad's thigh with no mention from the other knights.

Galahad lived for those moments. He respected the distance Tristan would sometimes put between them, he was as devoted as any of the other knights to their duty. Their evenings together and time alone were enough for him. Though he would admit to a thrill blazing through him whenever Tristan rode alongside him and leaned over to steal a kiss, a hand placed high on his thigh. Sometimes nothing more than a greeting, sometimes an invitation. He lived for those summer days when they would ride out together and lose themselves in the woods, and in each other. And the long winter evenings when they would retire early and keep each other warm on a bed of blankets and furs in front of a roaring fire. Neither of them took for granted their time together. Knowing each battle might be their last. Neither discussed what would happen when they were finally discharged of their service and free to

return to a home they could barely remember. They dared not make those plans for fear of never being able to live them. Instead they stole time together and lived in those moments. They would live in those moments forever.

Chapter 2

Chapter Summary

Tristan and Galahad think of the future the night before the arrival of Bishop Germanus with the discharge papers

Tristan lay in front of the roaring fire, his bare skin baking despite the cold outside. On the morrow they would meet Bishop Germanus' party and soon they would be free from their service. Thoughts of this preoccupied him, but he was determined to put them from his mind for the night. The feel of the fur under him added to his general feeling of warmth and comfort as he waited for Galahad to return with more wood to ensure the fire through the night - both it seemed were determined to ignore the looming future for now.

When the door opened the cold blew across him, his hair standing up from the roots, he looked over to his lover as he dropped the wood into the basket at the door. The door swung closed and Tristan had to smirk at the sight of Galahad - wrapped up in a thick coat, snow coating him lightly. The sight was all the more amusing for the knowledge that beneath the coat he was naked other than his sandals. Under Tristan's amused gaze the coat and sandals were quickly discarded and Galahad joined him by the fire.

With soft words and softer eyes Tristan invited his lover to come and get warm at his side.

"My love, let me warm you." His words were gentle, his smile wolfish.

Galahad responded with a devilish smile of his own and promptly, moving to the fire, dropped down to the furs and snuggled into the crook of Tristan's waiting arms. Tristan, a little concerned with the chill on Galahad's skin - or so he would say - began lacing kisses on his younger lover. First lightly on his lips, then along his bearded jaw, down to his collar bone. Galahad rolled onto his back falling slightly from Tristan's arms so that he might continue with his kisses, which he freely did. His lips warmed Galahad as they worked their way down his quivering body. Making his way to Galahad's crotch he placed a trail of kisses along his hips before running his tongue up Galahad's length then circling it over the tip and taking him into his mouth.

Galahad moaned. His back arched as he struggled to contain the pleasure of Tristan's mouth on him. Tristan was gratified and his mouth curved in a smile even around Galahad's cock.

"Oh Gods!" Galahad cried out as Tristan sucked deeply as he drew back, before taking the whole length again, teeth grazing a little. "You torture me so." Galahad's words were almost despairing. Tristan let out a low chuckle at the words and felt his little pup tense up under the sensation. It did not take long for the now warmed boy to cum, pleasingly, in Tristan's mouth. He hummed his own pleasure as he took in all the spilled seed before climbing over the boy

and kissing him deeply. Another chuckle as Galahad moaned at the taste of himself on Tristan's mouth.

Tristan rolled onto his back bringing the boy with him, as Galahad tried to catch his breath. He sighed with contentment as Galahad nuzzled into his neck and began to squirm against his yet unsated arousal, grinding his hips down to Tristan's.

"Tomorrow we will be free." Galahad murmured against his skin. Almost as a promise. "Together we will be free." He laced kisses down Tristan's chest.

"Is that what you wish? Together?" He replied, breathless as Galahad's hips teased him.

Tristan had put off this discussion for a long time. Perhaps he was worried that the pup would move on and leave him. But moreover he just hadn't thought that they would both live to see themselves free. One of them perhaps, but for both of them to make it to the end of their service after having lost so many brothers, seemed like the odds were stacked against them.

Galahad stopped in his ministrations and looked at Tristan with a frown. "Is that not what you wish for also?" The frown turned to a teasing grin. "You were the one who wooed me as you'll recall and you've had time enough to decide it was a mistake."

Tristan smiled and ran a hand through Galahad's enticing locks. "This is true. I just never thought either of us would live long enough to reach this point." He knew the words were wrong when he saw Galahad's face fall.

"How can you think like that." His eyes were cast down and his words were soft, no anger behind them. Sadness perhaps.

Tristan tightens his fingers to gently grip Galahad's hair, forcing their eyes to meet. "I prepare for the possibility but hope that we won't face such a future." Truth was, if Galahad died and Tristan remained he was unsure how he would continue to live. He knew no life without him now.

Galahad still looked forlorn. Tristan pulled him up and into a tight embrace. "When we are free we discuss the future. I can tell you that I don't see my future without you in it." He took in the contemplative look on Galahad's face and knew the boy had no idea what they might do either. For all the pup's talk of returning home, he had been the youngest of them when taken to his duty and likely remembered very little of the family and lands he had left behind. Tristan did remember, being of an age to, and yet his desire to return had waned over the years - as Galahad's might, given time. He knew that had his family and lands remained they would have been altered by the years, though not as much as he - they would no longer fit together. He fit with Galahad - his family now. "Whatever you decide, wherever you go, I will follow." Tristan realised aloud. "You are my love, my home."

Chapter 3

Chapter Summary

The morning after they have discovered they are not to be set free until after one final mission - Tristan and Galahad deal with this in different ways.

Chapter Notes

Had to include in this chapter a vague reference to my (everyone's?) favourite scene from the movie - where Tristan hits Galahad's throwing knife with his - right in the middle!! 0_0

Galahad woke under the furs they had pulled onto the bed to ward off the cold of the winter night outside. If anything now he was too hot, with Tristan's warm naked body spooned up against his own he could feel that they were both clammy with sweat. With as little movement as possible so as not to wake his lover, Galahad pushed the furs off the bed, leaving them with only a blanket and each other's warmth. Despite his efforts, Tristan stirred next to him, pulling him tighter into his arms as Galahad felt Tristan slowly harden, his arousal apparent against him. Galahad found himself aroused as a response and welcomed the gentle kisses his sleepy lover laced across the back of his neck. He mused on how sex and the threat of death went together - their new orders and delayed freedom had driven Galahad to drink but Tristan to ardour in the face of what seemed a suicide mission. He had pulled Galahad back to his quarters when the drinking got too much and kissed the boy from head to toe, starting with his tear stained cheeks.

Now the morning had dawned and Galahad had, for the most part, sobered. Tristan's hand reached down to Galahad's cock and began to caress him lazily, quickly bringing him to full hardness. Galahad moaned, part in response and part as discouragement, muttering something about needing sleep for the day ahead. Tristan countered that it was already morning and this would be the best way to start the day. A difficult position to argue against. When Galahad could not in fact counter the argument he leaned back into Tristan, turning his head to allow his lover to lean in for a kiss as he continued to work his now throbbing cock.

Despite the drink he had imbibed, Galahad was fully aroused - almost as much from Tristan’s deep and languid kisses as much as the ministrations of his hand. They had the dual effect of quickening and slowing Galahad’s heart beat. When he came he pulled Tristan’s arms around him tightly and breathed. The older man allowing him to do so, holding him tight in return.

“I needed that.” Galahad bit back the tears and clung to Tristan.

“I know pup.” Tristan replied, a hand running up into Galahad’s hair.

There was a moment of silence. And then a moment more. Galahad knew that Tristan wasn’t going to speak of the night before - the way each of the brothers had dealt with the news of their extended service, with anything from acceptance to violence. Galahad and Tristan, their ways of dealing with such things differing, ended up at odds. Despite the evening starting merry, their impending release cheering all - Tristan aiming for the middle of his throwing knife - a cheeky promise to his lover as much as a display of skill. Galahad had barely been able to contain the chuckle that arose, much less the urge to pull Tristan into a kiss - propriety be damned.

But then the news had soured the evening. Galahad remembered Tristan’s venomous comment, and his own aggressive words.

“We're all going to die someday. If it's a death from a Saxons hand that frightens you, stay home.”

“Listen, if you're so eager to die, you can die right now! I've got something to live for!”

I have you to live for, he had meant. He buried his face deeper into Tristan’s neck. He knew he didn’t need to apologise, anymore than he would expect an apology from Tristan. Their words both came from the same source - the fear of losing each other.

After a few minutes, Galahad had started to nod off. He was still held tight in Tristan’s arms, with his spilled seed drying sticky, when Tristan did speak.

“I told you last night to stay home. Would that I could will that. Would that you could stay here and be safe and have your service at an end and no longer have to fight. I would always fight twice if it meant you would not have to.” Tristan’s words were tender.

Galahad felt fresh tears on his face. He never made a secret of not enjoying killing as the others seemed to - Tristan especially. He was as proficient as any of his brothers, and in truth knew no other life, and yet he did not have an appetite for it. Perhaps making them an odd coupling, Tristan was the opposite - this life had been made for him, he was a natural but not indiscriminate killer.

“I’m not eloquent like you, my words were harsher than intended as I feared to lose you.” He was lacing kisses in the younger man’s hair. “I am sorry for them, they did not come out as intended. If we had time, I would make it up to you further.”

Galahad hummed his loving acceptance. He wished they had more time too, but with the sun now up, they would shortly be saddling up for what would be the last mission for them all either way.

Chapter 4

Chapter Summary

The Saxons have come and gone. Dreams of things that once were.

This is the last chapter that is drawn from Will's dreams in my Hannigram fic - tomorrow's chapter will be what comes next.

Chapter Notes

As mentioned at the very beginning, this fic wasn't quite how I hoped as I didn't have much time on it. I wanted it to be a lot more in depth, as a result this is a super short chapter, but important.

Snow fell around the camp, lighter than it had been, but enough to keep adding to the already thick layer that surrounded the tents. They had been away from their post for a week, a patrol along the south side of the wall amongst a few villages that had been recently raided by interloping Woads. All had been reasonably quiet until they caught up with the raiders. It was a small group but they were determined and hungry - factors that made for good fighters. The knights had cut down half of them, the rest escaping back towards the wall.

They camped just north of the village to ward off any further intrusion, but it was likely the raiding party would give up or move on. Tomorrow the knights would move on too, trying to stay ahead of the raiders and cut down the rest if necessary.

Tristan was glad of the warmth the tent allowed, small enough not to fill with cool air, but big enough for both he and Galahad - another source of warmth to him. The fight had not been fierce today but even so they were both sore and bruised, a nick here and there. They lay naked beneath the furs of their bedding, warming each other through their aches.

Galahad lay on his back with Tristan nestled between his thighs, tracing his scars with a light finger. Wounds from previous combat between the new bruises. A finger trailed over the scar across his forehead, down to the scar on his cheek. it worked slowly across the scars on his shoulders and then down to the long scar across his belly. All the while Galahad held his breath whilst studying his lover's face which was lined with concern over each old wound as though he felt personally responsible for each.

Galahad leaned up and stole a kiss from the lips that lingered only slightly above his own, pulling Tristan down to him. Tristan moved so that he was nestled tight between Galahad's

thighs. The younger man held his breath with anticipation, closing his eyes as he waited for what he wanted - for Tristan to be inside him.

Tristan woke with a start, gasping for air. The tent flap had worked it's way loose and cold air stole through the tent, across the furs where Galahad should have been sleeping. The dream poisoned his heart, knowing it to be a memory rather than fiction. One of so many where he had lain with his young lover and found happiness he never thought he would know - assumed he would never know from the day he was taken from his family.

"My beautiful boy." Tristan's words little more than a whisper as his hand sweeps lightly over the cold furs. Although it isn't quite light, he doesn't dare fall back to sleep - completely certain is he that his dreams will turn to nightmares. He will see again and again that day, that final battle as Galahad stepped between him and the blow that was to bring him low. The Saxon lord had all but bested him, he had prepared himself for the deathly blow but the beloved boy he favoured above all, his heart, stepped between them. The last he saw was that beautiful pup as the wounds he had already sustained drew him from consciousness.

Every day since that day he dreamed of Galahad and woke to the coldness of the space beside him.

Chapter 5

Chapter Summary

> What comes after the battle, what comes when knights are final free? Where is home for them then?

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

The Woads, even the most sceptical amongst the knights would admit, had a power or magic that they would never understand. So many of their near dead they saved that day, so many that might have been lost to them. With chanted words, and herbs they had a vast knowledge of, they worked with the sick and injured. The almost dead.

The long, cold nights, Tristan had spent waiting for Galahad to be well again and released from the care of the Woads, were worth it for seeing him revived. On the battlefield he had lost consciousness before he knew his lover's fate, waking in the hands of the Woads himself. He had passed in and out of a troubled and fevered sleep as his wounds were treated for days unending. Finally he revived enough to hear the outcome of the battle and the fate of all, to be released without his dearest, his beloved. Daily he had returned to Galahad's side, through those days when it was uncertain he would awaken, to the ones where once waking, the pain tore through him. All the while, Tristan unable to do anything but watch and wait as the Woad nursed Galahad and his own bed grew colder.

The night Galahad had returned to his bed, his heart had swelled so that he thought he might become unable to breath. Galahad was still not fully recovered, but his wounds were healing and he no longer needed the constant care his nurses had provided. Tristan was to care for him now, until he was recovered fully and finally they could make plans for the future that Galahad almost lost.

He had gently laid his pup on the bed and watched him smile.

"I missed you." Galahad's raspy whisper.

"I saw you every day." He did not add that he saw him each night in his dreams.

"I missed you holding me."

Tristan smiled at that and took his place at Galahad's side, taking hold of him. He could feel the boy was smaller, his bones protruded more. He had slept for many weeks before finally waking and slowly recovering.

“I need to feed you up.” He breathed into Galahad’s curls as he nuzzled into dark and soft hair.

Galahad hummed his approval, sleepy still. “Maybe later, I need other nourishment now.” His arms pulled up around Tristan, bringing them closer until their lips pressed together gently.

“You are still healing, pup.” Tristan reminded him despite being unable to stop himself moving his lips to Galahad’s bearded jaw, nibbling as he went. He had missed this, the closeness. It wasn’t about sex, though he had missed that too, it was so much more - it was like being cleaved in two and slowly withering away the longer he remained without Galahad - unwhole.

“That may be, but I need you.” Galahad’s eyes were pleading. Loving but pleading. “Just be gentle, it will be ok.” His words were soft as he moved one hand up to Tristan’s face, smoothing over his beard.

Tristan didn’t need to tell Galahad how impossible it was to refuse him.

Gently then, my love.

He leaned in and kissed Galahad slowly, languid, accepting Galahad’s quiet and desperate moan into his mouth. Tristan felt his chest tighten - anticipation, love, apprehension. He felt for a moment like he might burst.

Tristan pulled back and looked deeply into his young lover’s eyes. “You must tell me if you need to stop at any time, you must tell me if you are in pain.” Galahad gave a curt nod - an agreement that he truly would rather than allow Tristan to feel guilty over causing him any pain, as willing as he might be to ignore it.

Tristan rose from over Galahad and moved off, returning with the small vial of scented oil they kept for these moments. He moved next to Galahad on the bed before pouring some of the oil into his hand, rubbing his fingers to warm it before moving his hand between Galahad’s cheeks and circling them. He leaned in and took Galahad’s smiling lips as fingers gently worked their way into his lover, met with moans.

He pushed two fingers into Galahad, circling around as he spread the oil. He was aware of every hitched breath from his lover, but none appeared to betray any pain. Tristan laced kisses down from mouth, over his jaw, down to his neck - sucking deep kisses into the tender skin there. Slowly, gently, he pushed in and curled his fingers, glancing over Galahad’s prostate. The boy’s breath hitched again and was released with a sigh of longing and pleasure.

Galahad’s hands moved into Tristan’s hair, one running through it, the other tugging a braid lightly as he moaned and arched. Encouraged, Tristan started to slowly stretch his lover, fingers alternating between scissoring and moving across Galahad’s prostate.

“So good.” Galahad sighed, each vowel elongated. Tristan murmured his own pleasure into Galahad’s skin as he took his time, tenderly preparing his lover.

When the boy started to squirm Tristan took his cue that it was time to move on. Smiling down at Galahad, he moved over him, settling between his thighs, pumping himself with a freshly oiled hand. His hands then ghosting over the once toned, but now a little undernourished thighs of his lover, as he spread them all the more. The feel of Galahad so withered stabbed at his heart. But now he would care for him in every way he could - make him, make them both, whole again.

Galahad let out a long, low moan as Tristan lined up his cock and pushed gently in. He stilled, let Galahad adjust before pushing forward bit by bit.

“Please Tristan…” Galahad’s hands moved down to Tristan’s back, pulling him closer. Tristan took his cue to move again, slowly pushing the rest of the way in and pulling back - his thrusts delicate. The friction intense and building pleasure within them both. Tristan pressed close to Galahad, barely moving with each thrust - staying buried deep. Galahad groaned - his cock trapped between them - another delightful friction.

Tristan would not have believed they would last very long, so long had it been. And yet, this slow burn between them, this tender friction, was lasting. Tristan could feel his release building so exquisitely slowly it was almost a shock when Galahad, gentle moans and sighs rather than groans and panting of their usual love making, came between them. The sudden tensing of Galahad’s muscles, of his tightness around Tristan, pushed the older knight over the edge. He blinked away his tears of pleasure, of relief at having his Galahad returned to him.

“I love you.” Galahad’s voice was that of someone spent in pleasure.

“I would be lost without you.” Tristan admitted, a dark feeling in his chest that he might have lost Galahad finally lifting now that his lover was truly returned to him.

His bed was warm once more.

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As Galahad recovered in the days and weeks that followed, they made plans to depart. At length they had discussed their future and, as Tristan knew would be the case, Galahad wished to return to the land of his family.

“Will you come?” He had asked so tentatively, as though he could ever really doubt the answer.

“I would have no choice really, if you leave you take my heart with you. I would surely die of that.” Tristan had answered the matter of fact truth that had made the pup laugh and jostle him.

Only one thing remained before they would leave - the strange and wonderful day of marriage. There in the sight of the Gods and friends, family really, their new Woad allies presided over the joining of many. Some their own, Bors and his lady Vanora, Tristan and Galahad, and ending the day of celebration with the wedding of Guinevere to Arthur - their new king. Tristan had been dismayed, or so he would tease, that this of all days Galahad had

chosen to wear leg coverings under his pteruges. When he might like to look upon the beautiful and awaiting legs of his groom. Galahad insisted that was why he had worn them - the others may think it decorum, a more suitable attire for a wedding - but in truth he wanted Tristan to be teased by the hiding of something which was normally freely open to him. Tristan had responded by removing them from Galahad as immediately as he had been able to pull Galahad away and consummate their marriage - earning amused looks from other wedding revellers as they rejoined the celebrations with Galahad now returned to customary leathers skirts.

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That had been over a year past and the thoughts of it regularly visited his dreams - the thoughts of loss and joy both. Often he woke trembling in Galahad's arms, ran a finger over the scar the Saxon had bestowed and told him in whispers how he dreamt they had been bested, that Galahad had died of that wound. Despite how far they now travelled from those events, they memories followed - drawing the men into a new closeness of those who so nearly were lost to each other.

"We will go home, across the mountains…" Galahad all but whispered. They were drawing near to the village that might be his own and nerves now visited him. He slowed his horse further and further until he came to a halt. Tristan pulled up alongside him and placed a gentle hand on his thigh, these days warmed by the Eastern sun.

"It will be fine." Tristan reassured him.

The journey had been long and arduous. Neither had enough memory of the journey from Sarmatia not to rely on the charts provided by their Roman allies before leaving the wall. Unfortunately the routes, once used to harvest the children-to-be-knights, were meandering as they visited town and village to reap. Tristan's people had been nomadic and he had no wish or expectation of finding them, that life was behind him. For his part, Galahad knew not which village was his from the maps.

And so they went from place to place - tribe to tribe. As time passed Galahad became more anxious, afraid that this venture would be fruitless - once all Sarmatians were nomad, perhaps his people wandered once more. In the last town they had passed through the people had spoken of a family that might be Galahad's - from the descriptions he could remember. And so that settled their next destination.

They sat atop the small hillock, overlooking a warm and inviting village.

"What if this isn't it?" Galahad asked. He did not need to look at Tristan for him to know there were tears in his eyes.

"Then we continue." He squeezed his young lover's thigh. "It has been many months since we left Arthur, it could be many more before we find your family, but I will not stop looking as long as you want me to."

Galahad turned and smiled at him. "You are my heart."

Tristan returned the smile, in his gentle tweak of lips.

As they descended into the village several people came to greet them. Suspicious looks giving way to welcoming smiles as they recognised the Sarmatian armour.

“Welcome home children.” An older woman raised her arms with a smile. It was a greeting they had met in many places they had travelled so far - so few of them ever made it home. A phrase becoming familiar to them, both becoming better acquainted with Scythian, the almost forgotten language of their childhoods.

“We are Galahad and Tristan.” Galahad said, having found this was the quickest and easiest way to introduce themselves. So far, in each place, it had been met with a slight disappointment, quickly hidden. Then they had asked after those that had been taken from them and gratefully heard all that the knights could tell them. Treasuring the information, even to know of those who had died. Each place they passed through had been warmed to see them, saddened to hear so few lived - they had met Lancelot’s family and told them how bravely he had died - it seemed some consolation. They had chanced upon a brother of Gawain who had cried on hearing his brother lived well, giving them messages to take should they return to the cold island that had been their home far longer than this stretching expanse.

This time though, a murmuring through the crowd, a young woman walking forward.

“Brother.” She smiled and went to Galahad who sat in quiet shock.

Tristan smiled. The girl was almost identical to his lover, her hair longer, her skin darker from the better sun these lands received. Never before had he seen people so clearly related.

“Alda.” Her name was on his lips. “Alda? I think I remember.” She was nodding at him to confirm. He grinned and finally got down from his horse and accepted her embrace.

“Welcome home brother.” Tears flowing down her cheeks as she continued to smile.

Tristan waited, many people moved off, some stayed to touch Galahad - a hand on his shoulder here and there. One older man ruffled his hair. Such a child he had been when they took him, they probably never expected one so young to survive and come home. Finally the bustle quietened and Galahad grinned as he looked up at Tristan. Then Tristan dismounted, still standing aside - not wanting to intrude on the welcoming.

A small group returned, he could pick out words about a feast being prepared. They started to pull Galahad off with them. Alda turned and took hold of Tristan’s arm and brought him along, he would not have dared resist.

In a communal building, food and drink was provided. Merriment was undertaken, the spirits of the whole tribe lifted by the return of their own. Tristan took a seat and watched as Galahad was embraced by his tribe. He was warmed as they took turns in telling him of their memories of him as a child. Laughing, more hair ruffling from elderfolk. In this time Galahad’s Scythian seemed to improve by necessity.

Tristan was surprised when Alda came and sat beside him. She took his hand in hers and placed it in her lap, looking at him to intently. She spoke slowly, obviously aware that his Scythian was likely as poor as her brothers' - in truth it was slightly better.

"My brother tells us he owes you his life many times over. You trained him so that he could protect himself, and you saved him when you had to. You have loved him so dearly that his heart was not as broken as it might be so far from home. I thank you for this, more than I can convey."

Tristan squeezed the girl's hand, unsure how to reply. He cleared his throat. "He saved me too, in every way that he could."

She nodded. "You love him deeply. I see it in your eyes. He will need you now. I have told him our parents are long dead, but he will not grieve until this merriment is over."

Tristan nodded in return. "He is everything, my world. If I could take away his pain I would."

Alda smiled warmly, tears in the corners of her eyes as she dropped his hand and embraced him.

*

Alda had seen to it that they had a place to sleep, and they had taken to bed once the merriment had subsided. Galahad was in mixed spirits - elated at finding his people, moreover finding memories brought back that he had long forgotten. Friends, stories, a sister he forgot he had. Marred only by the discovery that his parents had passed before he could return.

Exhausted he lay in Tristan's arms.

"Thank you for helping me get here." Galahad sighed, snuggling into Tristan's side.

"You give me too much credit."

"Never." He affirmed with a smile. "My tribe are grateful you brought me back safely. I don't think they had much faith in my survival."

Tristan smiled but said nothing.

"We can ride out from here to find your tribe." Galahad suggested, perhaps misunderstanding his silence.

"My tribe are far from here this time of year I am sure." He remembered enough of the migratory animals that his family followed. "But I know their fate - my family were gone before I left."

"I… you never said." Galahad said, looking up into his face. There was a trace of hurt there that his lover had never told him this. In fact rarely had he spoken of life before the knights, and Galahad had never pried.

“My brother knights have been my family for some time. You are my family Galahad.” He leaned in and stole a gentle kiss.

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Several weeks passed amongst the tribe. A way of life, if once known to the knights, had been long forgotten.

They spent time with Alda and her family. The stoic Tristan becoming a favourite climbing frame for her several children, none of which he could correctly remember the names of - or so he would have them believe as he teased them. It was strange, and easy, but it was also so foreign. He wondered if Galahad felt that too.

He had his answer one evening, as they lay together. He looked down at Galahad, nestled in his arms and read the thoughtful look on his face.

“You are home now little pup, you need not think so heavily.”

“True. I am glad to have returned.” He confirmed but his look deepened to a frown. After a short silence he looked into his lover’s eyes. “Tristan, if I said that I wanted to return to that god forsaken island, would you think I was mad?”

Tristan’s lips twitched up in one corner. “Perhaps. The climate here is preferable.” He teased. “But no, you have dreamt so long of coming home and now find it is a place you do not know, with people you don’t remember who have their own lives.”

“We could slot into those lives.” Galahad countered, his own devil’s advocate.

“You already have - Alda has made a place for you in her family. But you wish for something more…” Tristan could see it in his eyes. As much as the boy had longed for home, he truly only knew how to be a knight. He may not take any pleasure in killing, but without a mission he was lost. Tristan felt the same, though would have said nothing and remained by Galahad’s side as long as he would allow.

“I think… I think I want to help Arthur. He has a feat ahead of him and needs knights he can trust.” Galahad added, not adding something Tristan knew to be the truth - that he missed his brother knights who had been his family these long years.

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Although decided, it was several more weeks before the knights left the tribe. The goodbyes were full of joy rather than sadness - knowing that Galahad was alive was enough to bring happiness to them even in his absence.

With refreshed supplies and well wishes, they rode to the top of the hillock and looked back down before continuing.

“You can still change your mind if you wish to stay.” Tristan offered. “You had no choice as a child, but now you can remain home if you so wish. Either way, I would never leave you.”

He looked at Tristan and gave a gentle smile full of love and fondness. “In truth, it does not matter where I am, you are - and have been for longer than I can recall - the only home I need.”

Galahad took one last look back before spurring his horse on. Tristan watched him ride, pausing for a moment before he would catch up with him - his boy, his pup, his beautiful lover who kept him alive in every sense. Who he would follow forever no matter what, who would always be his home.

Chapter End Notes

Well this has come out more melancholy than I had hoped for a happy ending, but I guess it is hard to make something lighter of war and freedom. Maybe if I ever do a follow on from this I will take it in a more fun direction, if inspiration strikes. I may do some drabbles based on the four years they were together before the Saxons came, as I'm sure there will be many good times to be had there :D

Thank you for reading! As always, comments/feedback appreciated! Hope you've all had an amazing Tristhad Week, I've certainly been enjoying all the stories coming out of it and found some amazing new writers to follow on here :D

RUUUUUUUUUUSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSS!!!! <3 <3 <3

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